Alice Meacham. Emotional Warfare: The Portrayal of Female Aggression in Children's Novels. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April 2010. 57 pages.
Advisor: Dr. Brian Sturm

This study examines the depiction of female childhood aggression in children's novels. With background support provided by sources from sociology and psychology, I sought to discover whether the seven novels selected portrayed bullying and aggression by female perpetrators in a realistic and developmentally appropriate manner.

Headings:

Bullying—Juvenile Fiction

Identity (Psychology)—Juvenile Fiction

Interpersonal Relations—Juvenile Fiction

EMOTIONAL WARFARE: THE PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE AGGRESSION IN CHILDREN'S NOVELS.

by
Alice Meacham

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Information/Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2010

Approved by

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Dr. Brian Sturm

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“Human aggression has faces and forms inconceivable within the realm of animal aggression.” (Bjorkqvist 179)

Introduction

"Sugar and spice and everything nice;
That's what little girls are made of."

Girls are encouraged from a very young age to conduct themselves like "ladies." Ladies do not get dirty. Ladies do not yell. And ladies do not fight. As humans, female children experience the same range of emotions as boys. They get frustrated. They have conflicts with their friends, family members, and classmates. This is all natural. The problem that comes into play, even in early childhood is that little girls are often discouraged from expressing their anger. While it is certainly not considered proper behavior for young males to hit, kick, or yell, it is often looked upon as "boys being boys" and therefore minimally punished. Girls are not allowed these same sorts of emotional outlets; therefore, their aggression and angst must be vented in more subtle manners and is often more emotional. Gossip and shunning enter into young girls' culture at young ages. Where boys might yell, girls will whisper. In late elementary school, these behaviors become much stronger, as the girls have the independence and ability to truly strike the right blows. Bullying increases with age. Through the subtle forms of emotional aggression, young girls are often able to maintain the outward appearance of being sweet and kind when being watched by adults, but can cause serious

amounts of emotional trauma to their intended victims as soon as the adults' backs are turned.

Literature Review

Gender and Aggression

HOW TO HAVE FUN WITH BLUBBER

1. Hold your nose when Blubber walks by.
2. Trip her.
3. Push her.
4. Shove her.
5. Pinch her.
6. Maker her say, *I am Blubber, the smelly whale of class 206* (Blume 71-72).

As much as people would like to think otherwise, there are some major differences between males and females, and not just in terms of their physical selves. It is true that boys and girls can have the same interests, excel at the same subjects in school or in the same sports. They can exhibit many of the same characteristics in terms of personality. But because of both biology and social conditioning, boys and girls often differ greatly in the manners in which they express aggression. Girls are less likely to be physically aggressive, and "typically use more subtle and indirect ways of bullying" (Olweus). Behaviorist, Kaj Bjorkvist, explains that in terms of female aggression:

> There is no reason to believe that females should be less hostile and less prone to get into conflicts than males. But being physically weaker, they simply have to develop other means than physical ones in order to reach successful results. Accordingly, one should not expect women to develop and use exactly the same strategies for attaining their goals as men do. (Bjorkqvist 178).

Whether actual physical prowess plays a role in female aggression is up for debate, but their apparent use of different strategies is certain. Other behaviorists have looked to

emotional development and socialization for explanations of the difference between male and female aggression. Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns of the UNC Center for Developmental Science agree with Bjorkqvist that physical ability plays a role, but there are four other factors that also contribute to the gender differences in terms of aggression: "social-cognitive development, changes in peer social networks and social dynamics, and gender differences in social roles and social relationships" (Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns 113). In reality, they most likely offer the best explanation for the difference because it takes into account multiple factors beyond just the physical or social. Within each element there are many issues to think about and to look into.

Girls typically develop at a more advanced rate than boys. This is true in terms of their bodies; it is also true in terms of their social and emotional intelligence. The development of aggression follows a fairly predictable path. According to Pepler and Craig:

> The developmental sequence of aggression starts with physical aggression, which declines starting in the preschool years and is replaced by verbal and social aggression as children acquire advanced verbal and social skills, as well as increased social intelligence (5).

It would follow that the more socially advanced a child is, the more likely they are to eschew basic and overt forms of aggression for the more subtle methods. Developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget, determined that an increase in "cognitive ability" and "social cognitive skills" enable older children and adolescents "to understand another's perspective and information in the broader social networks" which makes "the non-confrontational aggressive strategy more feasible" (Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns 112). The development in social intelligence means that "even more sophisticated strategies of

aggression are made possible, with the aggressor being able to harm a target person without even being identified (Bjorkqvist 179).

This is true for both boys and girls, but thanks to girls' general accelerated physical and emotional development "gender difference in social aggression increases during late childhood and early adolescence" (112). Indirect aggression rises "drastically at about the age of 11, especially among girls" (183).

It is likely that some of the indirect aggressive behaviors are learned, and not simply stumbled upon once reaching a certain level of social intelligence. Children watch adults and peers and learn from their behaviors. Social-cognitive psychologist Albert Bandura speaks of how "children can acquire entire repertoires of novel aggressive behavior from observing aggressive models, and retain such response patterns over extended periods." They learn the behavior that is being modeled and "[from] observing the behavior of others, people can extract general tactics and strategies of behavior that enable them to go beyond what they have seen or heard" (Bandura 14). Parents can often teach children how to behave in aggressive ways, without even realizing it. In Judy Blume's Blubber one of the primary bullies does not even blink when a relative of hers is insulted, because she has grown so accustomed to hearing her insulted at home.

> "Being a flenser is original but those judges were too dumb to know it.'
> 'One of them was my aunt,' Caroline said.
> 'Oh…I didn't mean to insult her.'
> 'That's all right. She is dumb. My mother's always saying so" (Blume 31).

Girls also find that society has certain expectations of them. They are supposed to be sweet, caring, and sensitive. They are not supposed to hit, kick, spit or yell. Those behaviors are the providence of boys. From birth, boys "are socialized to be more active,

aggressive, and independent and are rewarded for flaunting conventional behavior" (Artz 13. But girls have been socialized to believe that they must be "passive, caring, and dependent" and are therefore "rewarded for engaging in conventional behavior" (13). Therefore, some of the differences in aggressive behaviors "can be accounted for by differences in socialization" (13). These expectations mean that an indirect form of aggression can be "more advantageous for girls because it can be effected covertly and without detection" (Pepler and Craig 5).

Girls' friendships also tend to be structured differently than boys, with girls tending to favor smaller, more intimate circles based on trust and boys sticking to larger, looser groups based on shared interests. Because of the size and intimacy of a girls' social circles, it has been "argued that indirect social aggression may be more effective within girls' social contexts of small intimate peer groups than in boys' more extensive and less defined peer groups." (Pepler and Craig 6). Whether it is due to their nature, or to the size and quality of their friendships, "[girls] tend to be more concerned with social status and relationships than boys" (Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns 112).

So girls learn that within their specific social context "[direct] confrontational strategies such as physical or verbal aggression may not be effective given the range of and type of damage they inflict" (112). Instead, females' aggression often takes the form of "gossip, ostracism, breaking confidences, and criticism of a victim's clothing, appearance, or personality" (Hess and Hagen). Studies have shown that females "rate such aggression as more hurtful than boys, suggesting their heightened sensitivity to it." (Hess and Hagen). Subtle and covert forms of aggression are utilized most commonly

because girls have learned such behaviors are socially acceptable for their gender, difficult to spot from an outsider's point-of-view and viciously painful for the victim.

Physical Aggression

Physical aggression is the most basic form of aggression. It can be comprised of any form of aggressive physical contact including, but not limited to: kicking, hitting, biting, slapping, pinching, hair-pulling or spitting. "Among young children lacking verbal skills" or children who are not emotionally developed enough to find other, more subtle outlets for their frustration, "aggression is predominantly physical." (Bjorkqvist 179).

Because it is the most overt and direct type of aggression, it runs the highest risk for observation, punishment or retribution. Even from young ages, girls learn that physical violence is not acceptable within the expected norms of female behavior. They are supposed to be kind, caring, and well-behaved. Females also develop earlier than boys, not just in terms of development of their bodies, but girls tend to be "more advanced than boys at making the developmental transition from physical to verbal and social forms of aggression." (Pepler and Craig 6)

It is thought that both stereotypical expectations in terms of gender, as well as earlier development lead to females using physical aggression significantly less than their male counterparts. Pepler and Craig discuss how the expectations of female stereotype effect their use of physically aggressive behavior, even in early childhood:

> Once girls can identify themselves and others as females, their aggression in playgroups declines and becomes less normative. The majority of girls learn that

> aggression is not consistent with the female sex stereotype and adjust their behaviors accordingly. By the end of early childhood, children are not only aware of sex roles, but are somewhat rigid in their perceptions of behaviors appropriate for females and males. Both girls and boys are aware of the strong aggressive component in the male stereotype. Therefore, girls are likely to experience dissonance between behaving aggressively and cognitions of appropriate female behavior. Girls may also consider aggression as an inappropriate social problem-solving strategy for their gender (10).

Studies have shown that "observations on the school playground indicate that girls exhibit physical aggression only half as frequently as boys" (Pepler and Craig 6). So even at younger ages, girls are less likely to express physical violence, though in later childhood "social role differences in males and females (including the expression of anger and interpersonal control) may become more dominant, with greater social sanctions against females' use of physical aggression" (Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns 112). Therefore, as they age, the female's use of physical aggression drastically decreases.

This is not to say that physical aggression is never utilized among females. Children in late childhood and pre-adolescence, regardless of gender, develop at different times. Some girls who have not yet emotionally matured to the point at which they have the ability to understand other people's emotional states enough to properly or comfortably make use of more indirect forms of aggression, or those who have successfully used physical aggression often in the past may continue on with physical aggression as long as they find it effective.

Verbal Aggression

> [Agnes's father] asks her, 'How's school?' but doesn't turn his head.
> "Fine," says Agnes. And then she adds, "Except for the usual jerks."

> "You mean bullies?" he asks.
> Agnes is a little shocked to have her father's full attention. "Just some mean kids at school," she says.
> "Are they hitting people?" asks Mr. Parker.
> "Umm, no."
> "What do they do?" Mr. Parker pulls up a chair.
> "Oh, you know. They call people fat or gay and make fun of them…"
> "Some things never change," says Mr. Parker. (O'Dell 40)

Verbal aggression can be defined as "face-to-face verbal confrontations such as insults, threats, name calling, and hurtful teasing" (Pepler 5). Unlike physical or covert forms of aggression, "girls and boys are relatively equal in their use of verbal aggression" (5). Possibly because of this equal use between the genders, verbal aggression is the most common form of aggression among children. A study about bullying conducted over a two month period study by Wang, Iannotti and Nansel showed that of their subjects "20.8% [were bullied] physically, 53.6% verbally, 51.4% socially, or 13.6% electronically." Coloroso found in her research that verbal aggression "accounts for 70 percent of reported bullying" (15). The ease with which verbal aggression can be utilized is likely to have something to do with its prevalence. "Verbal abuse "is easy to get away with and can be whispered in the presence of adults and peers without detection. It can be yelled out on the playground and blend into the din heard by the playground supervisor, written off as crass dialogue among peers." (Coloroso 15) Its appeal is not only that it is easy to cloak under a whisper or the background noise of day-to-day life at a school, but it is "quick and painless for the bully and can be extremely harmful to the target" (Coloroso 15). It has maximum impact with minimum effort.

Verbal aggression requires little in terms of emotional or social intelligence either. All it really requires is verbal skills. Once developed, verbal skills are "quickly utilized

not only for peaceful communication, but also for aggressive purposes" (Bjorkqvist 179). Since displays of aggression always run the risk of observation and punishment, as well as retribution, it is important to the aggressor "to find a strategy as effective as possible, while at the same time exposing the individual to as little danger as possible" (185). Verbal aggression succeeds in "[putting] distance to the opponent" and is therefore "accordingly less dangerous than physical aggression. Therefore, when verbal skills develop, verbal means of aggression tend to replace physical ones whenever possible" (185).

Beyond the basics of name calling, verbal aggression can include many forms such as: "taunting, belittling, cruel criticism, personal defamation, racist slurs, and sexually suggestive or sexually abusive remarks … extortion of lunch money or possessions, abusive phone calls, intimidating e-mails, anonymous notes containing threats of violence" (Coloroso 16).

Covert Aggression

Often the terms for the three types of covert aggression: social aggression, indirect aggression, and relational aggression, are used interchangeably, but in actuality there are subtle differences between the three, though they all benefit from not being instantly recognizable from an outsiders point of view. A teacher or parent may not even recognize they are occurring because the signs and behaviors are so easily masked or over looked. Sometimes the aggression can be so subtle or oblique, even the victim may not be able to recognize who the perpetrator is. Albert Bandura addresses this issue saying:

> "People ordinarily do not aggress in conspicuous direct ways that reveal causal responsibility and carry high risk of retaliation. Rather, they tend to harm and destroy in ways that diffuse or obscure responsibility for detrimental actions to reduce self-reproof and social reprisals. Most of the injurious consequences of major social concern are caused remotely, circuitously, and impersonally through social practices judged aggressive by the victims but not by those who benefit from them (13).

Indirect Aggression

The actions involved in indirect aggression are typically simple for the perpetrator to enact, and extremely painful for the victim. In Blubber, the whole class is performing in a choir concert, but as the performance is just about to begin, a simple but cruel act of aggression is devised, "Wendy leaned close and whispered, 'Nobody sing *breast* but Blubber. Pass it on…" (Blume 65) In a seemingly simple action, nobody sings the one embarrassing word except the victim. When it happens, and it does happen, it cannot be easily discovered who was responsible for the attack.

In its most basic form indirect aggression can be seen simply as "behavior aimed at hurting someone without the use of physical aggression" (Artz, Nicholson and Manguson 268). This can include behaviors such as "ignoring, avoiding, and excluding others from social interchanges" (Xie, B.Cairns and R. Cairns 107). The behaviors involved with indirect aggression are similar to those of social aggression, but it differs in that "in that the perpetrator does not have to use the social community as a means of attack" (109). While indirect aggression is defined by the perpetrator's general lack of direct contact with the victim, it is "confrontational in the sense that the perpetrator [is]

present." (Xie 107) There is no interaction between the perpetrator and the victim, but in that purposeful absence of contact lies the aggressive act.

Indirect aggression is a more sophisticated form of aggression than physical aggression. It requires an advanced level of emotional intelligence. Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns found that unlike with physical aggression, "high levels of indirect aggression were associated with high levels of social intelligence" (110). It would follow that with high levels of social intelligence, empathy would be advanced as well, but "a high level of empathy was expected to be incompatible with indirect aggression" (Bjorkqvist 184). Therefore, the perpetrator of the indirect aggression has two qualities that can lead to a lot of hurt on the part of the victim: a high level of social intelligence to assist with manipulation and scheming, and a general lack of compassion.

Social Aggression

"If it takes two to fight, it takes at least three to gossip"
(Xie, B. Cairns and R.Cairns 119).

Social aggression is a form of aggression that uses a social network to attack a victim. It also serves the purpose of hurting the individual, as opposed to attempting to fracture the victim's relationships. Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns define social aggression as:

…[Actions] that cause interpersonal damage and are achieved by nonconfrontational and largely concealed methods that employ the social community. It includes gossiping, social exclusion, social isolation, social alienation, writing notes about someone, talking about someone behind his or her back, …and telling secrets/ betrayal of trust (107).

It can also include more minor behaviors like, "negative facial expressions and body gestures" (Xie 107). On its most basic level social aggression is a "nonconfrontational" form of "socially mediated" aggression that is intended to leave the victim feeling insecure and doubtful of him or herself (109). Social aggression, by definition is not centered around destroying the victim's social relationships, instead it "is focused more on making targets feel badly about themselves or afraid for their own safety without directly engaging in directly attacking them" (Artz, Nicholson and Manguson 268).

The power from this type of aggression is not simply in the actions, but in the numbers. It involved multiple people. If it were just an individual acting, it would simply be indirect aggression. Xie and her colleagues found that social aggression was more likely in female relationships, not simply because of their advanced social intelligence but because of the structure of girls' friendships. Verlaan states:

> "Popularity, social status, and particularly relationships are central to girls' lives. Close relationships can protect girls from victimization and promote group cohesion. However, aggression in close relationships can also be a cruelly effective tool to harm others. The secrets exchanged in close relationships can be used in shifting alliances to put down and discredit others…Clearly a dominant or popular status within the social network is critical in achieving successful harm to another" (162).

Also the numbers involved in the characteristic male forms of aggression and female forms of aggression often followed a pattern but were different from one another. Physical altercations, they found, typically "have a dyadic structure, but the majority of conflicts involving social aggression have a triangular structure or even more complicated structures. The participation of other individual(s) in the social community is critical for social aggression" (119).

There is an old phrase saying that “there is safety in numbers” and that is certainly part of the appeal for social aggression. When thirty people act the same way it could be difficult to decide who was behind it all. Confrontational aggression “makes the perpetrator clear to both the victim and other individuals” risking “direct revenge or escalation by the victim, and punishment by authorities” (109). Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns have found through their studies that there are three major benefits of using social aggression, as opposed to the confrontational strategies. First of all, “the perpetrator may be able to conceal his or her identity behind the social process” keeping his or herself safe while keeping all the rest safe as well (119). Secondly, “the likelihood of direct revenge becomes largely reduced” so there is little to no reason to fear the victim (120). And finally there is a “decreased chance of punishment by authorities” (120). Even if the social aggression were discovered it was found that in reported conflicts “that that teachers were less likely to intervene in social-aggression conflicts than in physical-aggression conflicts” (120). So, social aggression is one of the lowest risk ways for a person to express aggression.

Social aggression also works well by aligning with society’s expectations of how a stereotypical female is supposed to act. It is an acceptably “feminine way to exert strong feelings of anger and also keep other girls in the social community in line.” (Verlaan 162) It has the added bonus of being more hurtful to girls than to boys. It has been shown that the “effectiveness of social aggression is also perceived differently by boys and girls. The differential effectiveness is likely related to the gender differences in the use of social aggression” (Xie, B, Cairns and R. Cairns 113). It could be a “what came first, the chicken or the egg. Has social aggression been used so often by girls

because it is so hurtful, or is it so hurtful for girls because it has been utilized so often? One thing has been proven for certain, "[girls] perceived social aggression to be as hurtful as physical aggression, but boys perceived social aggression to be less hurtful than physical aggression" (113). Therefore regardless of the why, social aggression will continue to be used as long as it is effective.

Relational Aggression

Girls are significantly less likely to utilize physical violence to express aggression than boys are. A major reason for that is the way in which their social relationships are structured. Females have a tendency to have smaller, closer-knit friendships based on trust and sharing of confidences. These gender differences in relationships have a serious impact on "observed gender differences in social aggression" (Xie, B. Cairns and R. Cairns 113). Unlike boys, girls have a tendency to "focus more on intimacy and mutual support, with a higher degree of self-disclosure" (113). The profound "demand for intimacy and mutual support may increase the likelihood of interpersonal conflicts related to friendship loyalty and social exclusion" (113). While the behaviors clearly have their benefits, the "high levels of self-disclosure may make girls more vulnerable to gossip and betrayal" (113). It does not mean that these close-knit should be discouraged in any way, it simply means that an unfortunate side effect of them is an ability to manipulate personal relationships into a tool for expressing aggression. Even in casual interactions, girls are more likely than boys to focus on "relational issues" (Crick and Grotpeter 710). Discussing relationships is not simply the way in which girls fight, it is the way in which they are friends.

Because the point of aggression is to hurt an intended victim, girls will strike where it causes the most pain, and for many girls that is their relationships. Relational aggression is a form of covert aggression typified by "behaviors that harm others through manipulation or damage to social relationships or feelings of acceptance and inclusion" (Xie 109). Girls often utilize relationally aggressive tactics to attack a victim's social relationships or social standing. Relational aggression is characterized by behaviors such as:

> "Keeping someone out of a group, saying you will not be friends with someone, ignoring a person, telling rumors or lies about someone you are mad at, threatening to end a friendship or no longer talking to someone, and deliberately excluding someone socially." (Artz, Nicholson and Manguson 268)

They are all behaviors intended to injure and manipulate social relationships. Some other common examples of relational aggression include, "becoming friends with another person as revenge… suggesting that others be excluded from interaction, telling another person's secrets to a third person… and trying to get others to dislike a person." (268).

Because relational aggression is so tightly woven into girls' personal relationships it is "the most difficult to detect from the outside" (Coloroso 17). When an aggressive strategy is as simple as girl A telling girl B she will not be friends with her if she keeps being friend with girl C, it is almost impossible as an outsider or authority figure what is going on.

The bully utilizing relationally aggressive tactics needs a great deal of social and emotional intelligence. Relational aggression "requires more advanced cognitive and social skills. For a social attack to be effective, a person needs accurate knowledge of interpersonal relationships and subtle skills of manipulating social relationships." (Xie

110) This is a much more difficult type of aggression to understand and carry out than calling someone a name, or kicking her in the shin.

Passive Aggression

There is one last form of aggression that is by its definition, not aggressive at all. It was rarely mentioned, but it certainly occurs. When a group of bullies gets together or there is a public act of aggression that takes place, there are often people who do not show any particular aggression themselves, but also do not do anything to stop the aggressive act from taking place. They just watch and listen as a victim is attacked. Barbara Coloroso referred to this person as "the bystander" in her book, The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander. Bystanders are not bullies in-and-of-themselves, but instead bystanders "aid and abet the bully through acts of omission and commission" (Coloroso 62). Unless an individual is willing to stand up to the aggressor when they witness someone being attacked, they might as well be on the aggressor's side. Often enough a bunch of bullies is comprised primarily of bystanders.

A bystander is often unwilling to act up against the aggressor because she is "afraid of becoming a new target for the bully. Even if the bystander is able to intervene successfully, there is a chance she will be singled out at a later date for retribution. Bullies are quick to disparage and malign anyone who tries to intervene" (Coloroso 67). The proof of the quick vindictiveness of a bully is shown in every page of the novel Blubber. As soon as someone stands up to Wendy, she simply turns her aggression towards that person.

Another reason a bystander may not act up against an aggressor is that often children feel there is a social "code" they must abide by. One of the primary rules of the social code is that they should not intervene in fights that are not their own. It has been shown that sometimes up to 300 people "will look on without attempting to stop the fight" because the accepted social code "dictates their behavior to be passive" (Artz 184).

Problem

When children are reading literature it is important that they not only enjoy themselves, or learn, but that they are able to identify with the characters and their problems. Many books address the issue of conflicts and bullying, but how honest are these representations of childhood behavior? Are the portrayals of conflict and aggression real enough that a child could understand the problems the characters are facing as well as their reactions and responses to the issues?

Research Questions

Are the representations of female aggression and conflict in literature aimed at female children ages 9-12 honest and consistent with behavioral and sociological studies based on the subject?

Methodology

The fact that my research questions are based on the prevalence of aggression in children's novels, a content analysis seemed to be the most suitable option for my research.

Operational Definitions:

Aggression: Social cognitive psychologist Albert Bandura defines aggression as "behavior that results in personal injury and physical destruction." Though he clarifies that "not all injurious and destructive acts are judged aggressive." Whether it can actually be considered aggression or not "depends on subjective judgments of intentions and causality. The greater the attribution of personal responsibility and injurious intent to the harm-doer, the higher the likelihood that the behavior will be judged as aggressive." (Bandura 12).

Physical Aggression: Physical Aggression can be defined as a direct form of aggression that involves "physically assaultive behaviors such as hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, and scratching." (Craig 5).

Verbal Aggression: According to Craig and Pepler, verbal aggression "refers to face-to-face verbal confrontations such as insults, threats, name calling, and hurtful teasing." (Craig 5).

Indirect Aggression: Indirect Aggression is a non-overt, "more subtle form of aggression that is often indirect and thereby covert." It typically includes behaviors such as, "collusion, exclusion, alienation, ostracism, and character defamation." (Craig 5).

Social Aggression: Xie, Cairns, and Cairns from the University of North Carolina Center for Developmental Science define social aggression as an indirect form of aggression typified by "actions that cause interpersonal damage and are achieved by nonconfrontational and largely concealed methods" using the social community to attack. Examples of social aggression include, "gossiping, social exclusion, social isolation, social alienation, writing notes about someone, talking about someone behind his or her back, stealing friends or romantic partners, triangulation of friendship or romantic relationship, and telling secrets/ betrayal of trust." (Cairns 107).

Relational Aggression: Relational aggression is defined by utilizing "behaviors that harm others through manipulation or damage to social relationships or feelings of acceptance and inclusion." (Cairns 109).

Bully: The Oxford English Dictionary defines a bully as "a person who deliberately intimidates or persecutes those who are weaker."

Selection of Resources:

I chose to look at seven works of fiction ranging from 1940 to present day. The selected texts all needed to be focused on female protagonists who experience bullying, either as the victim, the bully, or a witness. The plot needed to be set in the United States. The perpetrators of the aggression also needed to be females, or if it was a bunch

of bullies, females needed to be actively involved in the bunch. All of the books needed to be appropriate in content and skill level for readers between the ages of nine and twelve.

The final seven novels were selected by searching Novelist K-8 Plus with the subject term "bullying" and using the search parameter limiting it to "older kids." The overwhelming number of titles that were recommended was pared down by looking for an average reader rating of four stars, protagonists in the set age group of nine to twelve-years-old, plots that were realistic fiction, and all set in a relatively contemporary time (relative to when they were written). The final selections also needed to be available for check-out from the Chapel Hill Public Library.

The non-fiction texts I consulted look at the issues of female aggression and bullying from either psychological or sociological viewpoints. The books were selected by searching the UNC Chapel Hill Libraries catalog using combinations of the terms, "female," "aggression," "childhood", "relational aggression", "indirect aggression", "social aggression" and "bully/bullying." The resources were analyzed using the specific gender and age range I had decided upon to see if they were applicable to my study. Further non-fiction resources were found through searches of EBSCO Host and JSTOR databases using the same search terms.

Selection of Information:

After reviewing my selected non-fiction texts, I was able to distinguish six distinct and recognizable types of aggression:

1. Physical Aggression
2. Verbal Aggression
3. Social Aggression
4. Indirect Aggression
5. Relational Aggression
6. Passive Aggression

Using the resources as a guide, I was able to establish operational definitions for all six varieties. The operational definitions, as well as a serious of examples of each form of aggression, served as my guide when analyzing the selected novels. It was important to not go into selecting the novels with a clear idea of how prevalent any of the aggressive behaviors were, or if all would be represented. The point of the study was to examine whether "realistic" novels addressing female aggression among children are consistent with sociological and psychological findings about aggression among girls of that same age range. Based on the types of aggression, I created a chart in which to track the use of the various types of aggression in each novel. All the novels are included on the chart, as well as the different types of aggression. As a form of aggression appeared in a novel, the box next to the novel, and under the type of aggression was marked off. I constantly made notes as to where the various types of aggression appeared in each book.

Results

The results of my study are first represented on a chart, then discussed by novel, and finally by type of aggression. The chart represents the appearances of the types of aggression in the seven novels.

	Physical	Verbal	Indirect	Social	Relational	Passive
Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress	X	X	X	X	X	X
Amelia's Bully Survival Guide	X	X			X	
Blubber	X	X	X	X	X	X
Harriet the Spy	X	X	X	X		
Larger-than-Life Lara		X	X	X		X
Roxie and the Hooligans	X	X				
The Hundred Dresses		X		X		X

Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress

This book has examples of every type of aggression. The bully, Neidermeyer is openly physically violent and verbally aggressive. Neidermeyer has a sidekick who helps her pick on people, so together they account for the social aggression. Agnes and her best friend, Prejean get in a fight, and ignore each other to hurt one another, thereby fulfilling the role of indirect aggression. And finally, there many instances in which Neidermeyer is teasing Agnes, or another classmate in front of groups of people. They could speak up against her, and when Prejean is there, she does but the others just let it happen.

Amelia's Bully Survival Guide

Hilary, the bully, in this novel has no qualms about grabbing Amelia by the arm, or saying nasty things to her. Hilary appears to lack the social intelligence to carry out acts of indirect or social aggression. She does affect Amelia's relationships with her classmates with her teasing, though that is more of a by-product of her direct methods. As with many books with a bully, there are many silent passive aggressors, who fall into the background roles of classmates.

Blubber

Wendy, the diabolical queen bee in Blubber provides examples of five out of the six types of aggression. Her primary victim, Linda, is grabbed and Wendy yanks at her clothes. Wendy calls Linda "Blubber" to her face. Wendy spreads rumors about protagonist Jill behind her back. Wendy has no problem with getting the whole class involved in teasing, even going so far as to create a list with some of her girlfriends of

cruel things to do to Linda. Wendy manipulates her social relationships to leave Jill alone and friendless as revenge after Jill refuses to heed Wendy commands. The only way she is not aggressive is passively. Jill and many of the other girls in the classroom take on that aggressive tactic. Even Linda refuses to stand up for Jill after Jill loses her social rank at Jill's expense. It is a book that revolves completely around female acts of aggression.

Harriet the Spy

Harriet the Spy involves a pretty decent amount of physical aggression. Harriet has a pot of ink dumped on her, and slaps the perpetrator of the dumping. Then she cuts off another classmate's hair. Verbal aggression is used when Harriet verbally attacks a fatherless classmate for revenge. There is a great deal of social aggression. Harriet's entire class decides to ignore her, and create an anti-spy club to plan their revenge once they discover Harriet has been writing down very personal and often hurtful information and opinions about all of them in her notebook. Each student punishes Harriet in his or her own way as well. For the nicest girl in the class, it is via indirect aggression. She simply acts as thought Harriet is not even present. All of the characters are quite actively aggressive, so there is no apparent passive aggression. And for all of the conflict, relationships are never used as tool for social manipulation or harm. They really do quite well with just the other forms of aggression.

Larger-than-Life Lara

There is some physical aggression in this novel, but it is perpetrated by some boys, so for the purposes of this study it is not relevant. The girls in Larger-than-Life Lara are more verbally and indirectly aggressive. They tease, and laugh at Lara in groups, and ignore her. Laney, the narrator, is passively aggressive and extremely aware and ashamed of that fact.

Roxie and the Hooligans

This book only contained two types of aggression, and they are the two most basic forms: verbal aggression and physical aggression. The bullies hit and bite, and make fun of Roxie and her ears. The bunch of bullies, or the "hooligans" are comprised of both boys and girls, but the ring leader and her main sidekick are both female and perform the majority of the attacks with the boys providing support. They hit and bite, and make fun of Roxie and her ears.

The Hundred Dresses

If simply reading the dialogue, with no embellishment, it might not be apparent that there was teasing going on in The Hundred Dresses. The words themselves are not harsh, it is the way they are said, and the fact that they are trailed by a large group of girls giggling. There is absolutely not physical, indirect, or relational aggression in this novel. But there is a significant amount of verbal and social aggression. And the main character, Maddie provides ample amounts of passive aggression. She knows that it is wrong not to stand up against her best friend, Peggy, for the poor victim of Peggy's

taunts, but she cannot seem to find the strength to do it, thereby providing silent support for Peggy and her taunts.

Physical Aggression

In Kathleen O'Dell's Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress, the bully, Neidermeyer, primarily utilizes physical violence, though it is no longer the social norm:

> "Neidermeyer has always been the tough one, even in kindergarten, where at every imaginative play session, she commandeered the toy electric shaver. Agnes remembers how she loved to walk around shaving, twisting that chin of hers left and right, talking with one eye squinched up, like Popeye. And even now, in sixth grade, she has not changed much. She is one of the last girls who still loves to sock people" (10).

Neidermeyer continues to use physical violence because it is the form of aggression she knows best, and it works for her. By saying that Neidermeyer "is one of the last girls who still loves to sock people", the narrator is making it clear that this is no longer considered to be an acceptable means of expressing aggression for the other girls Neidermeyer's age.

Other girls may have the ability and social intelligence required for more covert types of aggression, but they feel the need to combine direct with indirect aggression to cause maximum impact and pain to the victim. A bully wishing to "inflict emotional and/or physical pain, expects the action to hurt, and takes pleasure in witnessing the hurt" (Coloroso 13). If physical aggression is the most powerful tool to hurt the victim, then the perpetrator of aggression will use it.

The characters in Judy Blume's Blubber do not shy away from any particular type of aggression. Though they are in fifth grade, they are startlingly physical in their bullying. At different points throughout the novel the leader of the bullying, Wendy, yanks up a girl's skirt (32), trips another girl on the bus (136), and charges into a girl, "knocking [her] things to the ground" (144). It is not just Wendy though. When the victim of the bullying becomes book narrator, Jill, another girl in her class, Donna Davidson, "[shoves her] against the sink" leaving "a black and blue mark on [Jill's] leg" (137). In what is perhaps the most harrowing show of physical and emotional violence in Blubber, Jill describes the girls in the class banding together to make the victim, Linda, "show the boys her underpants. She wasn't anxious to do that so Caroline had to hold her hands behind her back while Wendy lifted her skirt" (90). This scene shows that in this particular case, it was not just the one bully physically attacking the victim. It was direct, but as there was a whole group, there was less of a need to fear retribution. This can be referred to as a "bunch of bullies" (Coloroso 19). A bunch of bullies "is a group of friends who collectively do something they would never do individually to someone they want to exclude or scapegoat." (19).

The bullies in Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's Roxie and the Hooligans, are without a doubt a "bunch of bullies." They even are go by a name, Helvetia's Hooligans. The Hooligans are comprised of both males and females, but the physical violence in their group is not solely the male's domain. Helvetia, herself bites Roxie, "digging her sharp teeth into Roxie's leg" (Naylor 31). Though they primarily act as a group, at one point "they "tried to tape [Roxie's] ears to the sides of her head with strapping tape. Her hair stuck to the tape and her ears burned, and when she finally got away and ran home, she

had red marks on both cheeks" (15). Utilizing their collective strength and speed, they were able to attack Roxie multiple times. First with the strapping tape, and later trying to glue underwear to Roxie's head (19). They, like, Neidermeyer do not seem to have developed to a higher stage of social intelligence, and are stuck at physical aggression.

In Harriet the Spy, the whole class becomes a bunch of bullies when they discover Harriet has been writing about all of them in her journal. The modes they take to "punish" her cover a whole range, but physical aggression is certainly included. They include throwing spitballs at Harriet's face (Fitzhugh 216) and pouring ink over Harriet's head and down her back (218). The manners in which Harriet gets her revenge though, also include physical attacks. After being covered in ink, Harriet "[hits] Marion across the face, making Marion's face entirely blue" (218). She also pinches another girl, realizing "[no] one would think of her because she had never pinched anyone in her life" (239). That is one of the big questions that all perpetrators must ask before acting out aggression, "Will I get caught?" For Harriet, in the instant she pinched another girl, the answer was, "no." But she later reaches a point in which she doesn't even care. She simply wants "to hurt each one of [the people that have been bullying her] in a special way that would hurt only them" (242). For one girl in her class, Harriet realizes the way in which she could cause the most hurt was to cut off her long hair, so "Harriet grabbed a chunk of Laura Peters' hair and chopped it off with some scissors she had ready" (244).

Though it is proven that physical aggression is less common for girls, it is clearly not completely unheard of. These books show examples of ways in which girls attack girls, both alone and as part of a group.

Verbal Aggression

The pervasiveness of verbal aggression is felt keenly in the novels I examined. It is the only form of aggression that was present in every book. In most books the aggressive remarks were focused around the intended victim's physical appearance. Due to this constant ridicule, it is not surprising that "[victims] suffer from low self-esteem; they have a negative view of themselves and their situation" (Olweus). When victims are constantly being reminded of their flaws, it is only natural that they should have feelings of insecurity.

Agnes, the title character in Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress gets new glasses and right away class bully Neidermeyer feels the need to comment on them, "Yo, Professor Geeky," [Neidermeyer] says. 'How's them four eyes?" (O'Dell 29)

The title of Judy Blume's novel, Blubber, reflects the nickname the students in a fifth-grade class give Linda, an overweight classmate. The students in the class use the nickname to maximum effect, yelling it, whispering it, singing it, and even making the victim, Linda, refer to herself as "Blubber." When she is first saddled with the nickname, the head bully, Wendy, makes certain everyone is aware of the new title: "As Linda climbed onto the bus Wendy shouted, 'Here comes Blubber!' And a bunch of kids called out, 'Hi, Blubber" (8). Only moments later, the girls on the bus start to sing "to the tune of "Beautiful Dreamer,' '*Blubbery blubber…blub, blub, blub, blub…*" (8). The shouts, and the songs are not the end of the very public use of the nickname. On the play ground the class is all set to jump rope and one of girls in the class teaches everyone "the

jumping rhyme she used to sing to the fattest counselor at her summer horse camp" (79). It goes like this:

Oh, what a riot
Blubber's on a diet
I wonder what's the matter
I think she's getting fatter
And fatter
And fatter
And fatter
Pop! (79-80).

The verbal aggression towards Linda is not limited to name calling, it also includes threats and harassment:

> "Now, cut out that stupid crying," Wendy told her, as she threw Linda her cape. "Here…put this on…and remember…one word to anyone about this and we'll *really* get you next time."
> Now say, *My name will always be Blubber*, Wendy told Linda.
> "No…because it won't."
> "Say it!" Wendy told her and she didn't look like she was fooling around anymore.
> I sat on the edge of my seat, not moving.
> "My name will always be Blubber," Linda said. There were tears in her eyes.
> "And don't you forget it," Wendy said, "because even if you weight fifty pounds you'll still be a smelly whale" (61).

Wendy manages to bring the verbal attack to a whole different level, by making the victim use the words herself. It is not just another person saying something to her. She cannot pretend she does not hear. She is forced to not only listen, but repeat the cruelty. It is cool and calculated, and Wendy knows exactly what buttons to push.

The titular character in Dandi Daley Mackall's Larger-than-Life Lara, is also an overweight girl. Her first day of school is peppered with remarks about her size. When going out on the playground that first day, many children make comments such as "Truck

Woman!" and "Jumpin Jumbo!" (19). Lara does not act like anyone else either, ignoring the traditional social norms and caste system of the classroom and offering praise (by way of a rhyme) to Caroline, the most popular girl in the class's sidekick, instead of to Maddie, the most popular girl, herself, as most people would. This earns Lara a cruel tirade in the middle of the lunchroom:

> "I don't get it.' All the sweetness had gone right out of [Maddie's] voice. 'What's wrong with you? Normal people don't just say rhyming things in the middle of the cafeteria. We only came over here because we felt sorry for you. I was going to try to help you by telling you that you should stop eating desserts, for crying out loud. Then maybe you'd start looking like a human, instead of a fat pig" (58).

For Maddie, as it would be with many other bullies, the public censure is simply "a rule-bound and purposeful activity engaged in to a redress of the intolerable imbalances [she] perceives in [her] largely hierarchical social world" (Artz 183). She must address Lara's actions as they signify that "the rules, which form a kind of code of conduct, have been broken" (183). Lara has not respected that Maddie is at the top of the social ladder, and therefore Lara has to be punished.

Roxie, of Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's Roxie and the Hooligans, is constantly being teased by the class bullies about her larger-than-average ears. On the playground they yell out such things as "Why, Grandma, what big ears you have!" (8). Helvetia and her band of hooligans do not stop at teasing Roxie about her large ears, they also threaten to hurt her. Helvetia shouts, "I think we ought to tape those ears to the sides of her head where they belong," and then later makes good on her threat, lending the threat some true weight (9). They are not simply words when said by Helvetia. One of the other hooligans, Smoky Jo, also likes to make threats. "'I think we should hang *her* up by the

ears!' she squealed" (10). According to Barbara Coloroso, "[bullying] is a conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity intended to hard, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror" (13). By not only threatening Roxie, but constantly attacking her both physically and verbally, Helvetia and Smoky Jo are successfully and effectively fulfilling their roles as bullies.

Amelia in Amelia's Bully Survival Guide finds that even random elements about your wardrobe and your looks can be fodder for bullies when classmate Hilary says she looks "like a doofus because [Amelia doesn't] wear knee socks and [she has] a stupid haircut" (Moss). Amelia cannot find anything wrong with her hair or her wardrobe, but she discovers that verbal aggression can have another price beyond just making the victim feel bad. Once Hilary said Amelia had weird hair and socks, "everyone else started believing it," so it starts to affect Amelia's other social relationships in the classroom (Moss).

Beyond making fun of a person's appearance, the bullies in the books also verbally attacked people with racist remarks. In Blubber, bully Wendy uses a racial slur to put some extra sting in an attack on protagonist Jill's character by saying that she is "turning chicken just like [her] chink friend" (Blume 131.) This is an affront in many ways. It hurts not only Jill by referring to her as a "chicken" and saying that she is weak, but more painfully it insults her best friend and treats her racial background as though it was something negative and to be ashamed of.

Things are not much better for Wanda Petronski in Eleanor Estes' The Hundred Dresses. After months of teasing, Wanda and her family move away and her father sends a note to the school saying:

> "Dear Teacher: My Wanda will not come to your school anymore. Jake also. Now we move away to big city. No more holler Polack. No more ask why funny name. Plenty of funny names in the big city,
>
> Yours truly, Jan Petronski." (Estes 47)

Though none of the main characters in The Hundred Dresses specifically mock Wanda because of her name, it is clear that it has happened, often, in the past and it has gone beyond the point at which it could be accepted. The names and teasing have truly damaged this family.

Some verbal aggression does not fit cleanly into one particular title. It is could be considered character defamation, or just flat out cruelty. Some things that are said are personal, and just meant to wound the victim, deep down. When Harriet decides to get revenge on the classmates that have been getting revenge on her, she chooses particular actions for each person that she know will hurt them the most. To one little girl who has been raised by her mother, Harriet just says a few sentences:

> The only words she spoke all day were when she asked Rachel Hennessey why she didn't have a father living in the house. Actually, what she said was, "You don't have a father, do you Rachel?" in a fairly conversational tone.
> Rachel Looked at her, horrified, and yelled, "I do TOO."
> Harriet said briskly, "Oh, no, you don't."
> "I do too," Rachel shouted.
> "Well, he doesn't love you."
> "He does too."
> "Well, then why doesn't he live with you?"
> And Rachel burst into tears. (Fitzhugh 243)

Barely half a dozen sentences and Harriet has caused an infinite amount of pain. That is the appeal of verbal aggression. It takes very little effort, and it can cut like a knife.

Indirect Aggression

Indirect aggression is an individual act, and it can be very clear who is responsible for the attack, perhaps not from a teacher or parent's point of view, but certainly as the victim. Agnes in Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress knows who her bully is, and the attack while obvious is nonetheless painful and causes a certain amount of insecurity. Agnes says, "Neidermeyer is just so…*herself*. And, of course, she pretends that Agnes is invisible" (O'Dell 34). By being bold, and by ignoring Agnes, Neidermeyer is creating an image of herself as a strong force of a person. It almost does not even matter whether it is actually true or not. Neidermeyer looks strong, and Agnes looks weak, and that is all Agnes is able to see.

Harriet, like Agnes, is made to feel less than normal when even the friendliest girl in her class chooses to ignore her. In this particular scene Harriet entered her classroom, and "she smiled at Laura Peters, who looked right back at her as though she weren't there. It made her feel creepy. Especially from Laura Peters, who smiled at everybody; who, in fact, smiled too much" (Fitzhugh 216). If the kindest girl does not think you are worthy of a smile, Harriet might reason, than is she? It is left to reason that she is, perhaps, nobody.

Amelia also finds herself in a position where she is ostracized. There is no reason in particular. She is simply finding that because she wears the wrong kind of socks, she is socially unacceptable. "Lucy and Matilda wouldn't play four-square with me and when

I sat down next to Susie at lunch, she changed places. It was awful." (Moss) The acts can be considered indirect aggression since they are not being enacted as a part of larger plan by the group as a whole, they are simply a collection of acts by numerous individuals choosing to ignore her.

Social Aggression

Gossip is an extremely potent strategy for social aggression. Gossip is plays dual beneficial roles from the perspective of the perpetrators. It not only hurts and discredits the strengths of the victim but also for the bully, can "be viewed as a way to project a positive self-image by discrediting others and establishing dominance and control" (Xie 124). After overhearing her classmates gossiping about a person that is only referred to as *her*, Harriet does some spying and discovers to her dismay that she is the person they are speaking so disdainfully about. "So it was she, Harriet, that they were talking about. She was *her*. How odd, she thought, to think of yourself as *her*." (Fitzhugh 224) She is shocked, but also hurt. All of the cruel words were being said behind her back, and by a large group of people, so there was no one person to shoulder the blame.

In Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress, the nasty Neidermeyer brings the whole class in on whispers about overweight classmate, Pat Marie, or as the other students often call her, "Fat Marie."

> "[Agnes] sees Neidermeyer whispering in Carmella's ear. Then Carmella signals to Brian, whose shoulders are already shaking with his nasty chuckling. Pat Marie's ears are sticking out through her straight hair and they are fiery red. Agnes knows that exact feeling" (O'Dell 37).

There is nothing loud or outright cruel about Neidermeyer or her classmates actions, they are simply talking and laughing, but the intended victim knows that she is the subject of the laughter, and it can only cause her pain.

Gathering together to laugh at a weaker classmate is an action that shows up in many of the books surveyed. In Eleanor Estes's The Hundred Dresses, the girls in the class led by popular student, Maddie, fake politely ask the poor Wanda about the one hundred dresses she claims to have hanging in her closet, knowing full well that she only has one well-worn and thin dress she has to wear every day. Instead of offering compassion to their classmate, the girls "laughed derisively, while Wanda moved over to the sunny place by the ivy-covered brick-wall of the school building where she usually stood and waited for the bell to ring." (Estes 13-14) It was not an accident that the girls in the class pick on Wanda, nor was it a onetime occurrence. "She didn't have any friends, but a lot of girls talked to her. They waited for her under the maple trees on the corner of Oliver Street. Or they surrounded her in the school yard as she stood watching some little girls play hopscotch on the worn hard ground." (Estes 12) They created a sort of girl gang to belittle this one girl, both to her face and behind her back. But always outside of the view of any authority figure.

Text has the special feature of being both extremely personal and direct, but allowing for a certain amount of distance and anonymity. Malicious notes are peppered throughout the reviewed novels. In Blubber, the note takes the form of scribbling on the street outside the victim's house, the protagonist of the novel, Jill describes that her best friend has "a piece of blue chalk with her" which she breaks in half, allowing a piece for

each girl as they both "laughed like crazy as [they] wrote *Blubber lives here* all over the street" (Blume 43). It is unlikely Linda, the victim, would ever be able to ascertain who wrote on her street, and equally as unlikely that either of the perpetrators would have done it alone.

In Harriet the Spy, the note is only written by one person, but as the whole class is acting as one to bully Harriet, she cannot know who wrote the actual note she finds on the floor. It reads "*Harriet M. Welsch smells. Don't you think so?*" (Fitzhugh 190). Harriet reacts to this by rushing to the washroom to sniff herself and scrub as she can. This instantaneous self-doubt is the shockingly powerful result of two short sentences on a piece of scrap paper.

Like with the note sometimes the action can be small. In Blubber, because she refuses to go along with one of Wendy's decrees, protagonist Jill, is labeled a baby and is teased for smelling bad because they claim she is not toilet trained yet. The rumor and the nickname spread like wildfire, so before Jill knows it she walks in a room and the girls in her class "all held their noses when [she] came near them" (Blume 137). It is a small action, and if one person did it, it would likely be almost laughable, but with a whole classroom full of girls participating, the effect is much more harsh.

Shunning and ostracism can involve a large number of people. In Harriet the Spy, Harriet is completely ignored by her entire class. The morning after Harriet's notebook full of secrets is read by her classmates, "Harriet arrived at school no one spoke to her. They didn't even look at her. It was as though no one at all had walked into the room" (Fitzhugh 188). In this case, it is not one bully hyping things up and engaging a larger

group. They are acting together as a whole group, so there is not one person to blame because they are all to blame. Harriet's classmates do not just ignore her, but actively make it a point to not include her. She finds that "everybody whispers together all the time and nobody says a word to [her]. At lunch [she] had to eat [her] tomato sandwich all alone because every time [she] sat down next to them everybody got up and moved" (Fitzhugh 209). They make it clear that they have decided she is not worthy of their time, and she is so repellant they cannot even bear to sit near her.

All forms of covert aggression are unique as they can hide beneath the surface of a typical room, but social aggression really is holds the distinction of being able to mask the lead bully behind a gang of followers. In some cases, there might not even be a lead bully. But regardless of the person responsible, ostracism, gossip, and notes can all be valuable tools in a female's bag of tricks in terms of aggression. They are both extremely powerful and subtle.

Relational Aggression

Among the fictional texts I reviewed relational aggression was somewhat uncommon, or acted as more of a bonus side effect from another intended aggressive behavior. In Blubber, Wendy intended to utilize social aggression and hurt Jill's feeling by saying she was a baby and smelled bad, but the rumor had the added relational effect of making Jill's classmates not want to be around her. In Marissa Moss's novel, Amelia's Bully Survival Guide, class bully Hilary makes fun of Amelia's hair and socks to make her feel insecure but Amelia's classmates respond to the teasing by avoiding Amelia.

The only true example I was able to find of relational aggression in any of my selected novels was in Blubber. Jill has defied queen bee Wendy's orders by finally standing up for Linda, and the following day Jill walked into class and "Linda was sitting in [her] place. 'Your desk is over there now,' Wendy said pointing to where Linda used to sit" (Blume 134). Wendy has befriended Linda for revenge on Jill. If Jill will not follow Wendy's orders then she will shift the social ground beneath her. Based on Wendy's behavior throughout the novel, it is believable that she has the social intelligence to commandeer a plot to bump on of the people at the top of social ladder to bottom, and to bring the person from the very bottom, the person that she feels caused the conflict to the top, simply for revenge.

Passive Aggression

The protagonists from two of the novels I examined would be considered "bystanders": Laney Grafton in Larger-than-Life-Lara, and Maddie from The Hundred Dresses.

Laney is poor and is used to being the victim for most of the bullies in her class. When overweight Lara appears on the scene, Laney is pained to see Lara teased but almost relieved that she, herself is getting a break. When completing a writing exercise in which Laney has to define what kind of person she is, she says that "Laney Grafton is the kind of person that doesn't do open meanness to a person, but couldn't help being a little glad that the meanness was going to somebody else for a change, because for three whole days nobody called her a name or tripped her at recess" (Mackall 61). Laney is not intentionally treating Lara with cruelty, but she will not stand up for her either and risk bringing the attention back to herself. Laney is not the only person in her class to

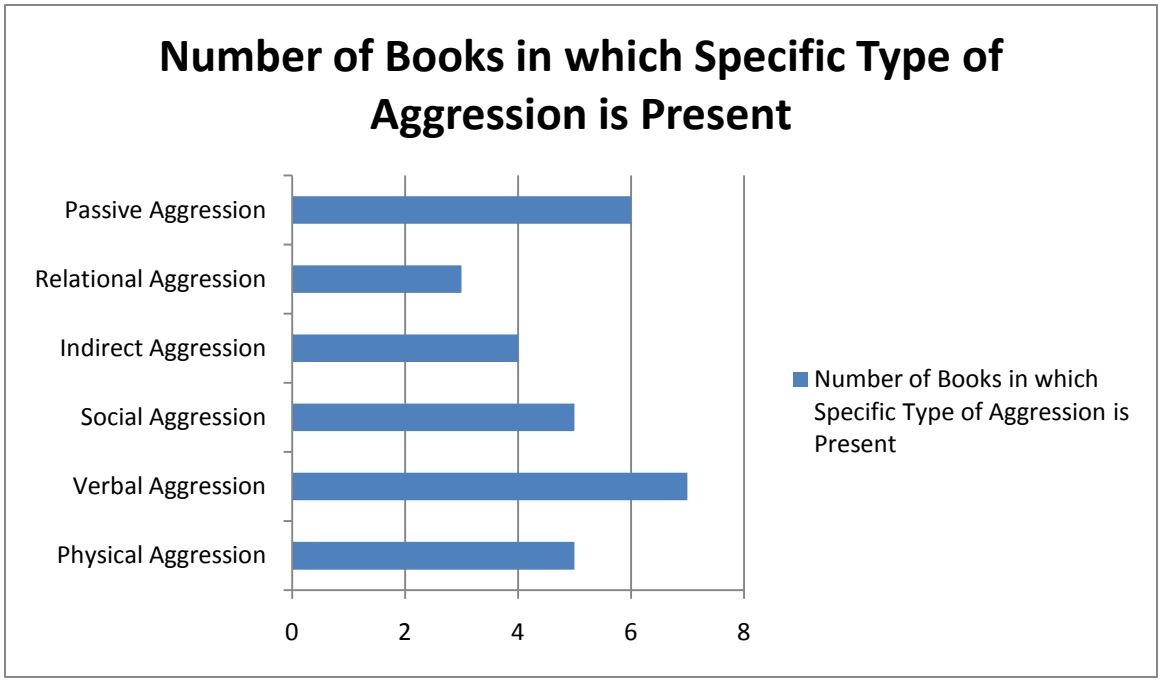
passively allow Lara to get tormented, after a particularly cruel joke her classmate, "Theresa laughed. She's kind of chubby, and [Laney] got the feeling she wasn't entirely against the idea of having somebody in class who made her look skinny. [Laney had] to admit [she] laughed, too. But it wasn't a real laugh, and [she guesses] that makes it worse." (Mackall 21) It could be said that the bystander is also a victim, but from the actual victim's point of view, Laney and Theresa would just be two more girls that are laughing at her.

Maddie in The Hundred Dresses is very disturbed by her role as passive aggressor. The active aggressor, Peggy, is her best friend, who also happens to be the most popular girl in the class. Peggy, with Maddie standing at her side, constant teases poor, Polish Wanda because Wanda claims to have a hundred dresses at home in her closet, and Peggy and everyone else knows that Wanda just owns the one pitiful blue dress she wears to school every day. Maddie tries to justify to herself why she is not standing up to Peggy about the bullied Wanda saying that:

> Peggy was not really cruel. She protected small children from bullies. And she cried for hours if she saw an animal mistreated. If anybody had said to her, "Don't you think that is a cruel way to treat Wanda?" she would have been very surprised. Cruel? What did the girl want to go and say she had a hundred dresses for? Anybody could tell that was a lie. Why did she want to lie? And she wasn't just an ordinary person, why would she have a name like that? Anyway, they never made her cry (Estes 16-17).

But in reality, Maddie, like Laney, does not speak up because she fears the lens might be turned on her instead. Maddie does not want to rock the boat, especially on the particular subject of clothing, because Maddie is also poor. She envisions a scene in which Maddie is "a new target for Peggy and the girls. Peggy might ask where she got the dress she had

on, and Maddie would have to say that it was one of Peggy's old ones that Maddie's mother had tried to disguise with new trimmings so that no one in Room 13 would recognize it" (Estes 35). Maddie cannot bear to think that she might be teased so she just grins and tries to ignore not only the "very sick feeling in the bottom of her stomach" but also the knowledge that "she had done just as much as Peggy to make life miserable for Wanda by simply standing by and saying nothing" (Estes 49). Maddie and Laney are not actively going out to hurt people, but they are hurting them all the same by their sheer inactivity.



Conclusions

My original research question asked if female aggression in literature aimed at nine to twelve-year-old girls was consistent with psychological and sociological findings about their real life aggressive behaviors. To find the answer to this question I looked non-fictional texts, created a set of criteria based on the operational definitions for the six distinguishably different types of aggression and analyzed seven children's novels utilizing those criteria.

Based on my research, I have discovered that verbal aggression is most common. My findings within the novels were consistent with that information. Every novel I examined contained verbal attacks of some sort, often they contained multiple examples of females verbally attacking their female friends and classmates. Verbal aggression is quick, easy to use, and potentially very painful, so it is not surprising that it is utilized so often.

Physical aggression is the most direct and glaring form of aggression. Females, even when they are young are not as likely as their male counterparts to express their aggression via physical manifestations. Physical aggression by girls towards girls was portrayed in the majority of the novels. The aggressors who relied most heavily on physical aggression, Neidermeyer from Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress and Helvetia from Roxie and the Hooligans, however, seemed to be the most socially immature of the

bullies featured in the novels. They seemed to lack the social finesse and emotional intelligence to navigate the waters of more covert forms of aggression.

The most covert form of aggression was highly prevalent in the examined texts, passive aggression. Unlike many of the other forms of aggression, it is often not malicious and has a stronger basis in fear than cruelty; therefore it is the most common among the characters that fall somewhere between the bullies and the victims. It is the aggression used by the people who want to remain in the background, so its pervasiveness is only to be expected.

The three other types of covert aggression, social, relational, and indirect are hard to gauge in terms of popularity in the real world due to their very natures. Studies based around them have shown that they are most common among girls, particularly beginning in late childhood and early adolescence. They certainly appeared in the texts, with the exception of Roxie and the Hooligans, every other novel contained at least one instance of covert aggression. The unpredictable and uneven appearances of these behaviors are perhaps consistent with their appearances in real life. Girls under the age of twelve are just beginning to understand the immense power of their social relationships and the ways in which they can take out aggression without seeming aggressive. Gossip begins to play a huge role not only in their conflicts, but in their basic social relationships and entertainment. It is possible that some of the girls like Peggy in The Hundred Dresses are not yet fully able to comprehend how the social roles they hold and the jokes they make can have a huge impact not just the victim's self-esteem, but their whole circle of social relationships. But as they mature they will understand that there are other girls, like

Wendy in Blubber, who take great joy out of leaking confidences and twisting social relationships for entertainment, reward, and revenge.

Further Research

There are many potential options for further research based on this study. One option is a study looking at the ways in which victims are selected by perpetrators of aggression, and how that is represented through literature. The research of these studies could be carried further and look at female aggression throughout adolescence into teenage years. It could examine how the behaviors change and how adults discover and respond to acts of aggression.

Cyber bullying has become a larger presence in school and in the media. A study could be conducted on how modern technology has affected bullying, and whether there is representation of the phenomenon in fictional literature.

My study looked at aggression from the aggressor's point-of-view. A further content analysis might look at how fictional "victims" in literature put a stop to being bullied, and whether the techniques they use could be translated to real life with any success.

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Appendix A

Title Summaries

Blume, Judy. Blubber. New York: Dell Yearling, 1974.
When overweight fifth-grader, Linda, reads aloud her report on whales she is immediately saddled with the unfortunate nickname, "Blubber." The harassment of Linda does not stop there, though, and as it gets worse the whole class, including narrator Jill, get out of control and the harassment takes them in directions none of them could have predicted.

Estes, Eleanor. The Hundred Dresses. New York: Harcourt, Inc, 1944.
Despite wearing the same faded old dress everyday, Wanda claims to have a hundred dresses lined up in her closet at home. The other girls in her class cannot believe her claims, and take to teasing Wanda at every available opportunity about her hundred dresses. All the girls go along with the teasing, but Maddie secretly wishes she could stand up for Wanda but fears getting teased herself.

Fitzhugh, Louise. Harriet the Spy. New York: Yearling, 1964.
Harriet plans on becoming a spy when she grows up, and that means she must write down in her notebook everything she observes, both the good and the bad. When Harriet's friends and classmates discover that her notebook contains often embarrassing and hurtful information about them all, they become determined to get back at her.

Mackall, Dandi Daley. Larger-Than-Life Lara. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2006.
Lara, a girl too big even for the class desks joins narrator, Laney's, fourth-grade class mid-year. Right away, she is dubbed "Larger-than-Life Lara," and is teased mercilessly. The students, though, are thrown when Lara does not react like most would, but always has a kind word to say, and a smile on her face even are the taunts and tricks become increasingly more cruel.

Moss, Marissa. Amelia's Bully Survival Guide. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1998.
Amelia is not excited for fifth grade. She has the meanest teacher, her very best friend has moved away, her second best friend has found another friend she likes better in her own class, and to top it all off, Hilary, the bully in class has started picking on Amelia. After months of teasing, Amelia discovers that the strength she needs to stand up to Hilary might have been inside her all along.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. Roxie and the Hooligans. New York: Ginee Seo Books, 2006.
Roxie Warbler yearns to be a famous explorer, but she first has to deal with all her own fears, which include the local gang of bullies who pick on her daily. Thanks to a mishap one morning when the hooligans are trying to beat Roxie up, they all find themselves lost on a deserted island. Roxie and the hooligans must get past their troubles to find their way back home.

O'Dell, Kathleen. Agnes Parker…Girl in Progress. New York: Dial Books, 2003.
Agnes Parker is shy, and has just gotten glasses. This makes her a natural target for class bully, Neidermeyer. To get through the year, to make new friendships and maintain old ones, Agnes is going to have to find someway to progress into a better, stronger self.